

Coventry City Council

Local authority

Inspection dates		11–15 November 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- All learners achieve extremely well across the service.
- Learners develop good confidence, communication and interpersonal skills to enable them to progress onto further study and employment.
- Tutors and learners make good use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons to support, extend and enhance learning.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance to access valuable work experience and raise their aspirations.
- The wide range of internal and external visits helps learners broaden their horizons and promote their progress.
- Leaders and managers have developed highly effective strategies to improve the life chances of those who need it most and to help learners develop good English, mathematical and functional skills.
- Managers provide a strong emphasis on developing all staff to encourage on-going improvement.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The proportion of learners completing their courses has declined, particularly for learners with free access to community learning courses.
- Too few lessons are outstanding and in a minority of sessions, the narrow range of activities does not challenge all learners sufficiently.
- Not all tutors use the results of initial assessment to develop individual learning plans early enough in programmes to support learners' progress.
- Arrangements for the collection and use of data are underdeveloped.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by
 - developing the range of activities teachers use
 - sharing good practice across curriculum areas
 - ensuring that the planning of learning consistently addresses the needs of all learners.
- Ensure that individual learning plans provide a framework for learning that both learners and managers can monitor at progress reviews to ensure that learners are on target to achieve their learning goals.
- Improve the collection and use of data to ensure that
 - the progression learners make within the service is closely monitored
 - the service is aware of where learners go after completing their programme
 - the service can monitor the performance of learners by venue
 - the service is able to set and monitor a wider range of equality and diversity targets.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The proportion of learners who successfully complete programmes leading to qualifications has declined slightly over the last three years but remains well above the national average. This is similar for non-accredited community learning courses. Pass rates are very high across the service. Most learners who finish their programme achieve their qualification aims or learning goals. However, the proportion of learners who do not stay until the end of their course has increased slightly over the last three years.
- The service monitors completion rates by different groups well. All groups of learners have high achievement rates. However, there are differences in the proportion of learners who complete their programme. Learners who have free access to community learning courses have consistently had the lowest retention rate of any group of learners. Slightly fewer learners from minority ethnic backgrounds complete their programmes than white British learners, but without a consistent pattern for any one group the service to act on.
- Over the last three years female learners have completed courses better than male, although the gap has narrowed in the past year. Learners with learning disabilities and or disabilities tend to complete better than other learners.
- The standard of learners' work is good and the service celebrates their achievements well. For example, music students hold concerts to demonstrate the skills they have acquired; those taking dance courses perform for their peers and learners' art and craft work are displayed in a number of adult education venues.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved slightly across the service over the past three years and are satisfactory.
- Learners gain confidence as a result of attending programmes. During courses they are encouraged to learn from each other and at the end of courses many are able to speak and perform confidently in front of their peers. In the majority of programmes, learners are encouraged to keep a diary to enable them to reflect on and record their progress. They value the lasting friendships formed through attending courses.

- Learners also develop good employability skills. Learners on independent living courses develop a wide range of practical skills to help them lead more independent lives and to communicate more effectively. They also develop their work skills through their involvement in art, gardening, catering, retail and business enterprise groups. From these courses they progress well onto work experience and paid employment.
- Most learners have clear goals for taking their course and are aware of what they want to do after completing it. However, the service does not monitor fully the progression learners make within the service and where learners go when they complete their programme.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and lead to high achievement for the vast majority of learners. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Very supportive and enthusiastic staff enable learners to make the most of learning and introduce a sense of fun. Learners make good progress and develop a wide range of practical skills and gain confidence to engage in further learning or progress into employment.
- Learners benefit from the high expectations of tutors and as a result, those who are reticent about participating grow in confidence. For example, in dance, music and visual arts and independent living programmes, learners take pride in performing or exhibiting their art or craft work or demonstrating their new skills to visiting employers. On the majority of programmes, learners make better progress than expected.
- Tutors are well qualified and use their high level of knowledge and an effective range of strategies to motivate learners. In the most effective sessions, learners work collaboratively and tutors challenge more able learners and actively encourage them to complete independent learning outside the classroom. In a minority of sessions, tutors adopt a narrow range of activities which do not sufficiently challenge all learners, the pace is too slow or instructions for the completion of tasks are not very clear and learners are confused.
- Learning is well organised and supported by good accommodation, well-maintained equipment and well-presented learning materials. Tutors use ILT effectively to extend and assess learning. For example, in a gardening session, held in a local park for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, learners used tablet computers very effectively to record and evaluate progress, which boosted their self-belief for job interviews. Learners increasingly use the recently-developed resources on the virtual learning environment, to support independent learning; however, learning technology is not used consistently well on ESOL courses.
- The care and support for learners are consistently good and the team of dedicated additional learning support staff and volunteer workers help learners to increase their confidence and enhance learning. Personal support is effective across all curriculum areas and as a result, those at risk of social isolation gain great benefits from attending sessions.
- Assessment practice is good. The initial assessment of learners' needs is rigorous in most curriculum areas and tutors use learners' starting points effectively to place learners on the appropriate course. Tutors use learners' self-assessments to set clear targets with them. However, on a few programmes, tutors do not use the results of assessment to set specific, individual learning targets sufficiently early on courses, to plan learning which will meet their individual needs or help review their progress.
- Tutors monitor learners' progress frequently using good questioning and observation techniques and learners respond well and demonstrate a good level of knowledge. Tutors give learners constructive and timely verbal feedback during sessions that helps them understand what they need to do to improve. However, although most tutors provide written feedback with helpful comments for learners, the service recognises that the practice is not consistent across all curriculum areas.

- Managers and staff have put in place a good strategy to support the development of learners' English language, mathematical, information and communication technology and work skills, which has resulted in good achievement by learners. For example, on health and social care programmes, an English class was set up to respond to the needs of learners on accredited programmes who required additional literacy support.
- Information, advice and guidance are good with effective pre-course information and on-course tutors' guidance on progression to higher levels of learning. Learners make good use of the National Careers Service that helps them consider and plan for their next steps.
- The promotion of equality and diversity during lessons is good. For example, ESOL learners are encouraged to discuss stereotypes, those on independent living skills to grow food from various cultures, and in performing arts, learners enjoy practising dance routines from all around the world. Tutors and staff create a culture of respect and the majority use appropriate and timely opportunities to celebrate diversity in sessions.

Visual and performing arts

Community learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the achievement of learners. All courses are non-accredited and the majority of teachers plan, assess and record the progress of individual learners well.
- The standard of learners' work is good and demonstrates the acquisition of a wide range of skills. In performing arts, learners work keenly in a well-disciplined environment and develop refined skills. Learners in visual arts enjoy a wide range of media and produce good individual work. Card craft learners make cards for family and friends and a few learners are producing a selection of cards to raise funds for a cancer charity.
- In the better sessions teachers ensure a brisk pace with good planning to involve learners in lively and stimulating activities to develop their skills. Teachers monitor learners' progress closely and encourage them to develop their work independently. Teachers use questioning techniques or extension tasks to help deepen learners' understanding. For example, learners attending the sugar craft sessions work hard at home to master the complicated techniques required to produce flowers and leaves to progress to the next process the following week. Teachers use peer critiques and evaluation effectively.
- In a few less effective sessions teachers do not always challenge or inspire the more able learners to work to a higher level, or to continue working between sessions to improve their skills. Learners copy work and lack the confidence to create original work of their own despite attending classes for several years.
- In most cases, teachers set clear targets for achievement and monitor learners' progress closely. Tutors and learners produce their own useful self-assessment profile. They are familiar with the assessment process and the future targets set for them.
- Teachers use ILT well to improve and inspire the learners. The service supports staff well in developing their skills to use the technology. The quality of studios and other resources is mainly good. Teachers supply materials for experimentation and exploration without causing the learners additional expense.
- Personal support is good and enables learners to overcome barriers to learning. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of learners and create a supportive, inclusive and safe learning environment. Due to this support, many learners, particularly those at risk of social isolation, gain great benefit from attending sessions. Advice and guidance are good at enrolment. Learners are clear about the course they have chosen.

- A significant strength is the range of additional activities which enrich learning. For example, tutors arrange visits to galleries and exhibitions and learners have opportunities to perform and exhibit their own work to the general public. An annual evening of dance, which has been running for seven years, included performances by learners from across the city. Visual arts and photography learners exhibit and sell work regularly.
- Most learners develop appropriate English and mathematical skills throughout their programme of study. Where relevant, learners apply functional skills within the art curriculum through pattern making, garment cutting, accurate drawing and scaling. Learners practice their literacy skills through arts- related research. Teachers encourage learners to use the correct technical terms for specialist crafts.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well in the curriculum. Teachers celebrate cultural diversity in lessons by referring to different artists, designers and musicians' work. The service has worked hard to attract male learners with success within the music and photography programmes. Learners feel safe and work in an atmosphere of mutual respect for both their peers and teachers.

ESOL

19+ Learning programmes

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and are particularly effective in significantly developing learners' language, employability and citizenship skills. Learners produce high standards of work and significantly grow in confidence whilst attending programmes. This correlates well with high success rates in language qualifications at level one and two. However, too many learners do not gain qualifications at entry level where tutors do not use individual learning plans well to help them complete their qualification.
- The majority of learners progress well in lessons. In the best sessions, learning stretches and challenges all learners. Lessons are interesting and fun and develop learners' speaking and listening skills while using opportunities effectively to develop reading and writing skills. Learners develop good employability and everyday life skills such as form filling and applying for jobs while significantly developing their English language pronunciation and use of alternative words such as pay, wages and salary. For example, in one language lesson, learners developed the language necessary to read and understand job adverts.
- Learners practise and reinforce their speaking and listening skills very effectively through planning, preparing and visiting, for example the cinema and city centres. In one lesson, tutors included numeracy to support learners with the skills to calculate and interpret pay and payslips.
- Tutors assess learners' work thoroughly and rigorously. Feedback to learners is constructive and aids improvement. Written feedback also provides helpful comments on how to improve. Tutors pay good attention to correct pronunciation and intonation. Learners practice effectively in small groups to master these skills. Tutors are generally well qualified and are keen to help learners.
- In the less successful lessons there is often too much whole class teaching that does not always stretch and challenge learners. Tutors do not always plan effectively to meet individual learners' needs identified at initial assessment. For example in one lesson, all learners were completing work on comparatives and superlatives that was not appropriate for the less able learners. Learning activities are ineffective in extending learning sufficiently in a minority of lessons.
- Individual learning plans set effective short-term targets for learners to work towards. However, they do not always include sufficient longer-term targets to ensure that learners achieve their overall programme. While learners develop good language skills many at entry level do not successfully gain their planned qualification outcomes.

- Advice and guidance are comprehensive. Learners receive appropriate guidance on what level of programme to follow. Tutors give learners further advice on progression opportunities and upon completion of their programmes many return to complete qualification units or higher level qualifications.
- Tutors provide effective individual learning support. Tutors, learning support assistants and volunteers work successfully with learners to engage them in lessons and to provide additional help when learners are experiencing difficulty with learning tasks. Many centres provide crèche facilities enabling parents with young children to attend sessions.
- Learners develop a good understanding of equality and diversity. Tutors carefully select learning materials to promote different backgrounds and experiences. Learners further develop their understanding of language skills in relation to occupations that were historically male, for example use of the term police officer rather than policeman. Lessons include discussions and language skills in relation to world festivals and current affairs such as a newspaper article entitled 'Would you trust a female pilot?'

Independent living and leisure skills

19+ Learning programmes Community learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which reflects how well learners develop their personal, social and employability skills. Staff have high expectations and motivate their learners well, and as a result learners develop good levels of well-being, self-belief, and a wide range of practical skills to help them lead more independent and richer lives. Learners increase their confidence, participate well in sessions and those with complex needs remain fully engaged in their classroom activities. Learners on the work skills programme progress well onto work experience to develop teamwork and vocational skills.
- Tutors are suitably qualified, experts in their subject area and have good knowledge of the practical skills they teach. They use ILT well to extend and support learning. For example, tutors encourage learners to present answers on the interactive white boards and they use tablet computers effectively to record learners' work and evaluate progress with learners at the end of sessions. However, in a few sessions, tutors do not plan activities that sufficiently develop good interaction between learners or appropriately challenge all learners.
- Learners receive effective care and support from learning support assistants and carers to help them participate and develop independent living skills. Staff promote health, safety and hygiene well during classroom activities. Learners with complex needs have good access to assistive technology to help them progress.
- The initial assessment of learners' needs identifies learners' starting points well. Managers use the information effectively to place learners on the most appropriate courses. When tutors set individual learning targets with learners they are sufficiently specific and measurable to inform the planning of learning; for example to ensure that learning materials and equipment are adapted to learners' specific needs. However, tutors do not always identify individual targets early enough, and as a result more able and confident learners do not have sufficiently challenging tasks to extent their skills fully on all courses.
- Learners receive useful and timely feedback from tutors with a good amount of encouragement to help them complete tasks successfully and maintain concentration. Tutors monitor learners' progress well, although in some lessons, tutors do not always give learners sufficient time to confirm that they have understood what they need to do to improve their skills.
- Learners develop their English, mathematics and ICT skills well during sessions. For example, in a retail session learners were able to complete accurate calculations to prepare the till before

the sale of art and craft products at their retail outlet. In a hospitality session, they took full notes of the questions they had prepared for their interview with a local hotel manager, and in a catering session learners completed a set of calculations to ensure that they had prepared sufficient food for the local nursery. Learners have access to a wide range of meaningful work experience to develop their teamwork skills and enable them to progress into employment.

- The information, advice and guidance that learners receive ensures that they are on the appropriate course. Learners on work skills programmes are actively encouraged to move onto opportunities outside the area of learning, which broadens their horizons. Visiting professionals such as health promotion workers, a hotel manager and a head gardener provide valuable information on work environments to raise learners' aspirations and develop healthy lifestyles. Learners on work skills courses are encouraged to undertake work experience and work collaboratively with other groups of learners to promote their work and sell products.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity well in the classroom with particularly good attention to learners' interests, aspirations and well-being. They provide a safe and friendly learning environment, value everybody's contribution, promote respect for all and foster a sense of community. Tutors challenge bullying and agree standards of behaviour with learners and as a result, learners are at ease to interact with staff and other groups.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Managers at all levels are particularly clear about the priorities of the service. Leaders and managers carefully prioritise funding to ensure access to learning for the most deprived communities. Strategically positioned centres in priority neighbourhoods target participation of those in most need of improved life chances.
- Senior council managers and relevant elected members provide good oversight of adult education. They have an appropriate knowledge of the mission and challenges facing the service. They also have an understanding of the quality of service offered and recognise the importance of good teaching, learning and assessment.
- A good, three-year strategy aims to improve teaching, learning and assessment through staff development, improved observations and mentoring and support for tutors who need it. Staff development programmes contain an appropriate mix of activities including a focus on improving teaching and learning. For instance workshops are effective in encouraging tutors to try new, more participative techniques in their sessions. In some curriculum areas good teaching practice is shared well between tutors. However, the sharing of good practice is not consistent across the service.
- Observations of teaching sessions are effective and supportive. Tutors receive one formal graded observation each year, carried out by two managers from different areas to help increase reliability of judgement. These identify improvement actions where required. Curriculum managers carry out further class visits, although they sometimes miss opportunities to identify improvement actions even where the tutor would benefit from further development. Comments in teaching observation records tend to relate to the whole group and too little attention is devoted to the learning and progress of individual learners.
- Tutors who need extra support receive it. Re-observations following a weak first observation usually demonstrate improvement. The service provides continued support until teaching performance is at least good. Annual professional development reviews take good account of teaching and learning issues and appropriate action plans promote further development.
- E-learning developments are carefully considered, and project funding obtained where this can enhance resources for learners, such as installation of additional smartboards in some centres. Venues are effectively checked for their suitability before use and can be further adapted as a

result of checking or learner feedback. For example, an additional disabled parking space adjacent to the entrance was added at one venue following a learner's feedback.

- Self-assessment is satisfactory and broadly accurate. The service gathers the views of community and special interest groups at each venue. It also uses the views of service managers and tutor and learner evaluations to inform self-assessment judgements. The improvement plan contains appropriate actions to improve. It contains sufficient detail to enable managers to make and monitor progress.
- The use of data to inform improvement planning is underdeveloped. Data on attendance, retention and success is available including for different groups of learners, although performance is not routinely analysed by learning venue. The service does not routinely capture information on the progression of learners onto further courses. The service is aware of deficiencies in its data collection and use and has made plans to improve this.
- Curriculum planning is very good. Managers ensure a carefully balanced curriculum offer across courses, venues and times to provide an appropriate range of opportunities city-wide. Response to community needs is excellent. For example, a new course now helps people cope with the digital requirements for seeking jobs and claiming benefits which form part of the government's welfare reforms. A 'preparing for volunteering' course trains volunteers to work in local community and voluntary organisations. Adult education is a significant part of the income in some community centres, supporting their viability and their ability to provide a wider range of services to their local community.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Although most venues are in priority areas, good planning helps ensure there is sufficient travel to most centres to support the integration of learners from different backgrounds and prevent the isolation of particular groups. For example, a ballroom dancing class was located at a centre whose other services target a specific faith group to encourage other learners to attend and promote community cohesion. Male learners, underrepresented in learning programmes overall, are encouraged to attend, for example, by promoting fitness courses as 'boot camp fitness'. However, target setting in relation to equality and diversity measures, for example, of participation or attainment, is underdeveloped.
- Arrangements for safeguarding learners meet statutory requirements. Managers keep good records of safeguarding incidents and actions taken. Risk assessments are highly effective and specific to each member of staff. Centres are accessible and adjustments made if needed to facilitate access.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Coventry City Council

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	19+ Learning programmes	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Performing Arts	2
Visual Arts	2
ESOL	2
Independent living and leisure skills	2

Type of provider	Local authority								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: N/A								
	Part-time: 6,711								
Principal/CEO	Simon Brake								
Date of previous inspection	5 October 2007								
Website address	www.coventry.gov.uk								
Provider information at the time of the inspection									
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	
Part-time	45	1903	10	274	1	102	N/A	N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19			19+			Total		
	N/A			N/A			N/A		
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18		19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		N/A		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	2,556								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	▪ N/A								

Contextual information

Coventry has a population of just over 300,000. The city has significant levels of deprivation in some areas. Coventry's population has fewer qualifications than average for England. A smaller proportion of the population has qualifications above level 1 than nationally. A greater proportion has no qualifications and unemployment is above the national rate. In Coventry as a whole nearly a third of the population are from minority ethnic groups. Nearly half of all learners undertaking adult education courses are from minority ethnic groups.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	William Baidoe-Ansah HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by a service manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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